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SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS COMPLEX AND RESIDENCE  
MINNESOTA VALLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
CARVER, MINNESOTA

In Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

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The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) has proposed to construct a Refuge residence as outlined under Section 2.2.2 of the “*Final Environmental Assessment, Proposed Maintenance Operations Complex and Residence, June 2003*” (FEA) for which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) issued a “Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on June 13, 2003. A two acre parcel of bluff top, Service owned property located in Carver County, Minnesota directly off of County Road 45 one-quarter mile north of the intersection with County Road 50 had been identified as the site for the residence. The proposed construction area was sited immediately north of the old driveway (See Map #1).

This Supplemental Environmental Assessment proposes to slightly modify the building location of the Refuge residence and evaluates the environmental impact of proceeding with such a modification. The Service’s Regional Director will decide whether this Supplemental Environmental Assessment supports a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or if an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will need to be prepared.

The Refuge has a need to evaluate a new proposed building location for the Refuge residence based upon a request received from the adjacent landowner and representatives of the San Francisco Township Board. The Refuge has proposed to construct a dormitory in the same vicinity as the residence. The private landowner and Township Board representatives requested Service staff to consider constructing the residence, rather than the dormitory, in the location which is situated closer to the private landowner. Whether a dormitory will actually be constructed in this vicinity will be analyzed under a separate Environmental Assessment that will be released shortly in draft format for public review. The only decision being considered in this Supplemental EA is to change the building location of the residence.

The new proposed construction site for the residence is located in the same general vicinity as the previously proposed development site as identified within the FEA. The new proposed site consists of a two-acre parcel of bluff top land situated immediately south of the old driveway or approximately 200’ directly south of the previous development site (See Map #2). T.115N., R.24W., Section 36, SW1/4NE1/4SE1/4. The physical characteristics, habitat and vegetation, public use, and cultural resources associated with this new proposed site are exactly the same as those of the previously proposed site. A topographic survey of this new site has been completed while soil testing still needs to be conducted. As with the previous site, no improvements exist at this site. Services such as utilities, sewer, and water would be developed and would comply with Carver County Ordinance No. 47 as needed.

The environmental impacts of constructing the Refuge residence at the new proposed site would be exactly the same as those identified within the FEA for the previously proposed development site. Two acres of restored prairie and soil would be impacted by the residence construction. The impact to water quality would be minor and short term since the use of siltation fencing would minimize the potential for erosion during construction. Short-term temporary impacts to wildlife would occur during residence construction. Construction activities could cause feeding disruptions and/or nest abandonment during

critical nesting periods for ground nesting birds at or adjacent to the construction site. The effect would be minor since often times another suitable location to feed and/or re-nest would be found. Residence construction would remove approximately two acres of restored prairie from the Refuge and also result in the fragmentation of five acres of prairie habitat. Concurrence was obtained on July 24, 2003 via a Section 7 Consultation with Dan Stinnett of the Bloomington Ecological Services Field Office, that development at this proposed site is not likely to adversely affect nesting bald eagles and/or their critical habitat. An archaeological reconnaissance survey of the proposed site will be conducted in September, 2004. Houses and other structures within one mile and within view of the proposed residence site are to be evaluated for eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The Section 106 process will be completed prior to implementation of construction. Approximately 15 acres of land would be permanently closed to public use upon the completion of construction. Construction and occupancy of the residence at this site would allow a Refuge employee to respond quickly to illegal activity anywhere on the Rapids Lake Unit. There would be no effect on the visual quality of the area resulting from residence construction. Buildings were previously present here and other rural residential housing is located directly south and west of the site. Native trees and shrubs would be planted to screen the view between the residence and the private landowner directly south of the site. No minority or low-income populations would be displaced or negatively affected in any way by this modification. The cumulative impacts of the proposed modification are similar in nature to those described in the approved FEA except that there is now a possibility that a second building, the dormitory, may also be constructed on this property. No additional construction beyond the two buildings is anticipated for this property.